

The Effect of Sexual Objectification on Rapist and Victim Blame in Non-Western Culture

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ABSTRACT

Sexual objectification refers to perceiving a person as an instrument for satisfying sexual desires. Even if the effects of reducing a woman to a sexual object on attitudes towards victims of rape have been investigated, these studies have rarely focused on the attitudes toward rapists, and most of them were conducted in Western Cultures where non-honor beliefs are common. With the current study, we aim to investigate the effect of sexual objectification on victim and rapist blame in honor culture, Türkiye. We hypothesized that the victim's sexual objectification would increase the victim-blaming but decrease the rapist blaming. The sample of this study consists of 79 female and 29 male Turkish heterosexual college students. The participants were presented with a newspaper report about a rape incident, and the victim of the rape was illustrated near the news. Objectification was manipulated by portraying the victim in either a sexualized or non-sexualized manner. Then, to measure how much the participants blame the rapist or victim, we asked them to rate several statements about the rapist and victim. They also answered questions about the appearance of the woman presented next to the news for manipulation control. Results indicated that the participants in the sexual objectification condition blamed the victim more than those in the control condition. On the other hand, contrary to our expectations, sexual objectification did not affect rapist-blaming. These results were discussed in terms of the relevant literature considering the limitations of the study.

Keywords: culture, rapist-blaming, sexual objectification, stranger rape, victim-blaming.